1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

must ask his permission to do anything. To be seen speaking to another man is grounds for divorce. On the other hand a divorced woman is free. She comes and goes as she pleases and speaks to whoever she pleases quite freely. Some women quite frankly remark that they prefer this status to that of marriage while others just as strongly remark that they would like to get a husband.

In summary, maturity is a time of achievement for men in which they become full-fledged members of their community. They marry, try to raise families, and become heads of successful and productive households. Women try to marry successfully and hopefully to have children. However, as I have pointed out elsewhere, tensions caused by the demands of subordination in their married role produce strains and rebelliousness that very often leads to the break-up of marriage.[8] In the final analysis the culture is androcentric; there are many means by which men can become successful—through their occupation, their associations with neighbors, relatives, friends, and important men, and through membership and finally headship of a household. In spite of a turnover in wives associated with the high amount of divorce, the household itself is a stable unit, although its personnel is not. On the other hand, it is the rare Kanuri woman who can achieve a successful adulthood. Many women are barren or have had children who have not survived. Very few women remain married to the same men all their lives and most have had one or more extended periods of being divorced and looking for a husband. By centering on men and emphasizing their needs and wishes, Kanuri culture has produced a strain on women that is a fertile field for changes when modernization produces the possibility of new goals for women and new means for achieving them.

Old Age

Old age is signalled in both sexes by the whitening of body hair even though other body characteristics may remain strong and healthy. For both old men and women this last period in life means that many of the obligations and responsibilities of adult life are slowly relinquished, although men generally feel that they belong to the adult roles much longer than women. As heads of households and office holders in governmental positions, men wield powers in a number of spheres and give these up slowly and reluctantly as old age drains away their energy and efficiency. Ideally in Kanuri culture a man should reach the golden years of his life in his old age. If all goes well he receives much respect; his work is carried on by descendants, and his position as a household head may have grown to the point where he is the senior authority among a group of households organized along the lines of a patrilocal extended family with clients, sons, brothers, and their wives and families looking to him for leadership. When he is very old and becoming progressively infirm, he lets many of these duties pass to mature members of the group. Even then they always consult him on decisions and pay heed to his wishes.

The reality in Kanuri society is often far from the ideal although the ideal is a very widely agreed upon goal. To obtain this most desirable position in old age a

[8] See Ronald Cohen, "Marriage instability among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 63, 1231–1249.

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[586] The value placed upon maintenance of connection with her own family after marriage is given by women as one of the reasons for divorce - "he would not let me visit my family" - which indicates that this value is somewhat in conflict with the other value attributes of adult female behaviour during marriage. In some marriages of long duration and much mutual trust, the woman's visits to her relatives were observed to be a normal, accepted and non-conflicting part of her role as wife to her husband. However, most men are somewhat reluctant to allow their wives to visit relatives and try to discourage such activity. High ranking persons send along a trusted servant to remain with or near their wives during the entire term of [152] absence from the compound. One informant, by no means an exception, became incensed because he heard that his wife (age about thirty-five, married and divorced several times before) who was travelling alone to Maiduguri to visit a sister, had stopped for two days in an intermediate town to visit other relatives and friends. A former husband of the woman lived there and the present husband was extremely worried lest his wife was having a licentious time while away.

Old Age

886 Old age is signalled by white hair for both sexes. Even though sexual potency may remain, this outward sign of white hair identifies the coming of the last period of life for both men (chiari, 888 old men) and women (kamursu, old woman). In both sexes old age means the relinquishing of some of the duties of adulthood though the man continues longer in his adult role than the woman. This is due to the increasing difficulty which an old woman finds in obtaining a husband if she has been widowed or divorced in later years. If she has a son he is expected to keep her in his compound; if not, she may